

Amendment and Response Under 37 C.F.R. 1.116

Applicant: Ray Mentzer

Serial No.: 10/008,968

Filed: December 6, 2001

Docket No.: 10010675-1

Title: APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR OBTAINING AVERAGE SCENE INTENSITY INFORMATION FROM A PHOTO DETECTOR ARRAY

REMARKS

This Amendment is responsive to the Final Office Action mailed October 18, 2005. In that Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-3, 6-11, and 13-16 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Fossum et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,949,483 ("Fossum"). The Examiner's indication that claims 4, 5, 12, and 17-20 have been deemed allowable, or would be deemed allowable if rewritten, is noted with appreciation.

With this Response, claims 1 and 13 have been amended, and claim 21 has been added. Claims 1-21 remain pending in the application and are presented for reconsideration and allowance.

35 U.S.C. §103

The Examiner rejected claims 1-3, 6-11 and 13-16 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Fossum et al., U.S. Pat. No. 5,949,483 ("Fossum"). Amended independent claim 1 recites an optical sensor array. The optical sensor array comprises an array of pixel circuits, each pixel circuit including a photo detector, a voltage supply line, and an output node for outputting image signals from the pixel circuit, wherein the voltage supply lines of the pixel circuits are connected directly to a common node of the sensor array that is separate from the output nodes of the pixel circuits; a voltage supply input configured to be coupled to a voltage supply and to the common node for supplying a voltage to each pixel circuit; and a sensing circuit coupled to the common node for sensing signals at the common node and outputting at least one signal representative of an average intensity of light directed onto the array of pixel circuits.

Thus, as shown above, claim 1 recites that the voltage supply lines of the pixel circuits are connected directly to a common node of the sensor array that is separate from the output nodes of the pixel circuits. Fossum does not teach or suggest this recitation of independent claim 1. The Examiner indicated that the node between the SHS and SHR transistors 200 in Figure 3A of Fossum corresponds to the common node recited in claim 1. (See, e.g., Final Office Action at page 2). However, this node in Fossum is not connected directly to voltage supply lines of the pixel circuits.

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In view of the above, Fossum does not teach or suggest each and every limitation of independent claim 1. The Applicant respectfully requests entry of the amendment to claim 1, removal of the rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), and requests allowance of this claim. Since dependent claims 2, 3, and 6-11 further limit patentably distinct claim 1, claims 2, 3, and 6-11 are believed to be allowable over the cited reference, and allowance of claims 2, 3, and 6-11 is respectfully requested.

Amended independent claim 13 is directed to a method of obtaining average scene intensity information from a pixel array. The pixel array includes a plurality of pixel circuits. Each pixel circuit includes a voltage supply line. The voltage supply lines of the pixel circuits are coupled directly to a common power supply node of the pixel array. The common power supply node of the pixel array is configured to be coupled to a voltage supply. Each pixel circuit includes an output node for outputting image signals from the pixel circuit. The method comprises isolating the pixel circuits from the voltage supply; sensing signals at the common power supply node generated by the plurality of pixel circuits; and generating at least one signal based on the sensed signals, the at least one signal representative of an average intensity of light directed onto the pixel array.

Thus, as shown above, claim 13 recites that the voltage supply lines of the pixel circuits are connected directly to a common power supply node of the pixel array. Fossum does not teach or suggest this recitation of independent claim 13. The Examiner indicated that the node between the SHS and SHR transistors 200 in Figure 3A of Fossum corresponds to the common node recited in claim 13. (See, e.g., Final Office Action at page 2). However, this node in Fossum is not connected directly to voltage supply lines of the pixel circuits.

In view of the above, Fossum does not teach or suggest each and every limitation of independent claim 13. The Applicant respectfully requests entry of the amendment to claim 13, removal of the rejection of claim 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), and requests allowance of this claim. Since dependent claims 14-16 further limit patentably distinct claim 13, claims 14-16 are believed to be allowable over the cited reference, and allowance of claims 14-16 is respectfully requested.

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Claim Objections

The Examiner objected to claims 4, 5, and 12 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but indicated that these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claims 4, 5, and 12 further define patentably distinct claim 1, and allowance of claims 4, 5, and 12 is respectfully requested.

In addition, with this Amendment, Applicant has submitted new independent claim 21, which is based on original claim 1, and includes the limitations from dependent claim 12 and intervening claims. The cited prior art does not teach or suggest the limitations of independent claim 21, and allowance of claim 21 is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above, Applicant respectfully submits that pending claims 1-21 are in form for allowance and are not taught or suggested by the cited references. Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections and allowance of claims 1-21 is respectfully requested.

Applicants hereby authorize the Commissioner for Patents to charge Deposit Account No. 50-1078 the amount of \$250.00 to cover fees as set forth under 37 C.F.R. 1.16(h)(i).

The Examiner is invited to contact the Applicant's representative at the below-listed telephone numbers to facilitate prosecution of this application.

Any inquiry regarding this Amendment and Response should be directed to Jeff A. Holmen at Telephone No. (612) 573-0178, Facsimile No. (612) 573-2005. In addition, all correspondence should continue to be directed to the following address:

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Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE UNDER 37 C.F.R. 1.8:

The undersigned hereby certifies that this paper or papers, as described herein, are being transmitted via telefacsimile to Examiner Jelinek, Group Art Unit 2615, at Fax No. (571) 273-8300 on this 15th day of December, 2005.

By: Jeff A. Holmen
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